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INTELL

MORE WOMEN DOCTORS

Five years ago the entering class at Stanford Medical School consisted of 3 percent women, 97 percent men. This year the proportion of women among first-year medical students at Columbia, Yale, and Stanford is approximately 30 percent.

In the past three years the number of women enrolled in the nation's medical schools has more than doubled. Further increases will take place this fall.

By 1985 it will surprise no one if 50 percent of American medical school graduates are females.

The first woman to break the medical career sex

barrier was Elizabeth Blackwell, who was graduated from Geneva Medical College in Syracuse in 1849.

In the Soviet Union, where approximately 75 percent of all medical doctors are women, it has long been held that women are particularly suited to such a career.

In the United States, federal legislation, feminism and concern for the quality of health care have all played a part in the admission of more women to medical schools.

What effect the growing number of women M.D.'s will have on the practice of medicine in this country remains to be seen. Dr. Helene Rauch, spokeswoman for Professional Women of the Stanford Medical School, predicts improved health care for women as one result of the changing enrollment pattern.

"I guess," she says, "the key word is empathy. Women consume over half the health services in this country. But two years ago only 7 percent of our physicians were women. Male physicians don't intend to be insensitive, but they just aren't in a position to understand how women feel."



DR. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL

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